STATUTORY RESOLUTION

Raising maximum borrowing limit for Rajasthan State Electricity Board

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI N. K. P. SALVE) : With your permission I move

"That in pursuance of sub-section (3) of Section 65 of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 (54 of 1948) read with clause (b) of the Proclamation issued by the President on the 15th December, 1992 under article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Rajasthan, this House accords approval for fixing under the said sub-section (3), the sum of one thousand six hundred crores of rupees as the maximum amount which the Rajasthan State Electricity Board may at any time have on loan under sub-section (1) of the said Section 65."

I will explain. The present maximum borrowing limit of the Board from time to time has been Rs. 1000 crores and that is sought to be increased to Rs. 1600 crores. The entire the amount of the additional loan will be used entirely for capital expenditure and nothing of it will go to meet the revenue expenditure. Because on 15th December, 1992, the President under article 356 of the Constitution has dissolved the Assembly, it is for this House now to approve the enhanced limit as is required statutorily under the Electricity (Supply) Act. I submit that the Resolution be adopted.

The question was proposed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Now, as there are no speakers ...

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA (Gujarat) : Sir, my name is there.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH (Maharashtra : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, we can dispense with the discussion on this.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : All right. I withdraw my name.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : I shall now put the Resolution to vote. The question is :

"That in pursuance of sub-section (3) of Section 65 of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 (54 of 1948) read with clause (b) of the Proclamation issued by the President on the 15th December, 1992, under article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Rajasthan, this House accords approval for fixing under the said sub-section (3) the sum of one thousand six hundred crores of rupees as the maximum amount which the Rajasthan State Electricity Board may at any time have on loan under sub-section (1) of the said Section 65."

The motion was adopted.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : We now take up the Statutory Resolution and the Bill relating to the Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

Statutory resolution seeking disapproval of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (Transfer of undertaking and repeal) Ordinance, 1993.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA (Gujarat) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir,

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN) : Are you not withdrawing ?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA (Gujarat) : No. Not on this. Where it is fair and right, I will withdraw. Where it is correct to press, I press.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Okey, but I will only request you to be a little brief.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : That can be done, but it is such an important Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : You take your time.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : Such an important Bill comes at this hour. Three hours were allotted for this Bill. That means, it would be midnight.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH (Maharashtra) : Three hours ?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : That is the maximum time-limit. I can agree for the minimum time-limit. I will try to be as brief as possible. I know you are waiting for some other engagements. So many dinners are being arranged.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Dinners ? Are you inviting us for dinner ?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : You

people are inviting others for dinners. That is the point.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : Are you keeping a tab?

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : The whole press is keeping a tab.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : Let us not prolong his speech.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : Now, Sir, I move the following Resolution :

"That this House disapproves of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (Transfer of Undertaking and Repeal) Ordinance, 1993 (No. 28 of 1993) promulgated by the President on the 2nd July, 1993."

First of all, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he would assure us that the question of modalities for disinvestment would be brought before Parliament? I am asking this question because 20 per cent of the equity is going to be disinvested. I do not know what is the actual worth. They say that it is around Rs. 375 crores of equity. They also say that they have got assets around Rs. 10,000 crores. I do not know how the equity can come up to that level. I say this because, earlier, the Government was giving loans. They had also borrowings. Secondly, the O.N.G.C. was a monopoly company. They were making profits every year. For the last several years, it has been around Rs. 2,000 crores. The people have contributed towards this.

Sir, this point was raised when the question of disinvestment was discussed. At that time, the hon. Finance Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, said that Parliament would be taken into confidence before the disinvestment was done. As has been pointed out by several Members, had that been done earlier, the Government would not have been in trouble as they find themselves in today.

Now, the O.N.G.C. is not a rolly-polly company. It is one of the biggest companies in the public sector. It has contributed substantially to the profits of the public sector. It is also one of the giants in the international arena. The question would be : what are the modalities for disinvestment? I have been asking this question since the last three weeks. I have been raising this point during Question Hour and through Unstarred Questions and all the time it is said that no decision has been taken about modalities. On the one hand, you are deciding to disinvest and on the other, you are not prepared to work out modalities. If that is so, how are you going to mobilise? I know the bureaucrats. They think that they can go in the way they like. Therefore, it is for the Minister to take action. The Finance Minister has agreed to take the Parliament into confidence. And this is not a small company, it is such a big company. We are proud of this public sector undertaking. When they go in for disinvestment, you should take benefit of the consultation with the Members of Parliament. They will be helpful to you. So, kindly give assurance.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : I am constrained to say that this is a very important Bill and it is the responsibility of the ruling party to at least provide quorum for this Bill. We are 8 to 9 people on this side. I am very sorry that I am raising the question of quorum but this is not the way to proceed with the Bill of such importance. So, please provide quorum.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : I would also not have wished that somebody should raise the question of quorum, but it is such an important legislation. If you want to pass this Bill with 10 to 15 Members in the House, what would the people of India think about you?

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : We never raise the question of quorum in this House.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : He is raising the question of quorum. Gujral ji is a very senior Member, but on your own you should see what to do.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : I have raised the question of quorum, Mr. Vice-Chairman.

SHRI VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : When the question of quorum is raised, we have to go according to the sense of the House. What is the sense of the House?

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : There is no question of sense of the House. There is no quorum. We are providing ten Members and they are providing only 5 Members. Are you serious about this?

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH : We have discussed far more important Bills. Mr. Gujral, if the House is interested in a particular thing, Members who are interested, should be present here to debate the issue. This has been the tradition of this House.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : It is for

the Government to provide quorum. They must see to it that the Members are present here. They cannot ask us to vote when they cannot even provide the people here. It is their responsibility.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : When there are so many people absent from your side.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : You continue your speech. You take a little more time. You try to complete and then I will decide what to do.

THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN) : Our only request is that this is an Ordinance which has to be converted into a Bill. It has come rather late and that is why we are asking for this. May be, some Members are not there.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : That is why I asked him to keep on speaking. Within four-five minutes I will give my ruling.

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL : You cannot say like this. Once I have raised the question, you cannot say like this. The proceedings of the House, according to the rules, cannot take place when there is no quorum.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Mr. Gujral, you yourself have said that it is the duty of the Treasury Benches to provide quorum. The whips have rushed out for completion of quorum. Let us wait at least for four-five minutes. *(Interruptions)* Okay, ring the quorum bell. You keep on speaking. *(Interruptions)*. It is for the Chair to give the ruling if quorum is not there even after the quorum bell is rung. *(Interruption)*. You have to proceed according to the instructions of the Chair. You have raised the question and I am asking for ringing the bell for quorum. In the mean time, you keep on speaking.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : The moment the quorum question is raised, it has to be decided at that moment.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : No, you have to at least co-operate with the Chair till the quorum bell is not stopped. Please keep on speaking.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : This is undue co-operation I am offering, under compulsion.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : Mr. Mehta, the Leader of the House has explained the problem of the Government. So, at least bear with me for a few minutes more.

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA : It doesn't matter, Sir. I will go by your wish.

Now, I do not know what is the block capital, what is the net worth, what is the price of machinery and what is the land value. All these components have to be worked out. When you are going to disinvest, you should look into all these aspects and come with a proper report to us.

Sir, to day I have learnt from the newspapers that one more IOC head has rolled. Earlier also the CMD was suspended. Now, these are very big companies. There is rampant corruption. *(Interruptions)*.

Why are they unnecessarily embarrassing themselves? Tomorrow it will be reported in the press that when such an important Bill was being discussed, you insisted on quorum. Therefore, I say, it is a question of dignity of the House that we always maintain the quorum. Kindly consider it. If you want me to speak, I will go on speaking. Ultimately the quorum question comes. It is Mr. Gujral who raised it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SYED SIBTEY RAZI) : I will go according to the sense of the House as well as the point raised by the hon. Member. The House stands adjourned till 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at fifty-two minutes past seven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 27th August 1993.

GMGIPN—107 RSS/ND/94—400.